



Fire Extinguishers Fact Sheet

General information on the use of a portable fire extinguisher

Portable fire extinguishers have two functions: to control or extinguish small or incipient stage fires and to protect evacuation routes that a fire may block directly or indirectly with smoke or burning/smoldering materials.

To extinguish a fire with a portable extinguisher, a person must have immediate access to the extinguisher, know how to actuate the unit, and know how to apply the agent effectively.



Attempting to extinguish even a small fire carries some risk. Fires can increase in size and intensity in seconds, blocking the exit path of the fire fighter and creating a hazardous atmosphere.

In addition, portable fire extinguishers contain a limited amount of extinguishing agent and can be discharged in a matter of seconds. Therefore, **individuals should attempt to fight only very small or incipient stage fires.**

Prior to fighting any fire with a portable fire extinguisher you must perform a risk assessment that evaluates the fire size, the atmosphere in the vicinity of the fire and the fire evacuation path.

Training

Employees who have been designated to use fire-fighting equipment (i.e. Portable Fire Extinguishers) as part of an emergency action plan must be trained on the proper selection and use of the appropriate equipment.

Training is required upon initial assignment to the designated group of employees and at least annually thereafter.

Classification of Extinguishers

Class A or ABC Extinguisher Fire: Wood, paper, textiles, and other ordinary combustibles.



Class B Fire: Flammable liquids, oils, solvents, paint, grease, etc



Class C Fire: Electrical: Live or energized electric wires or equipment.



Class D Fire: Combustible metals (magnesium, titanium, potassium, etc.)



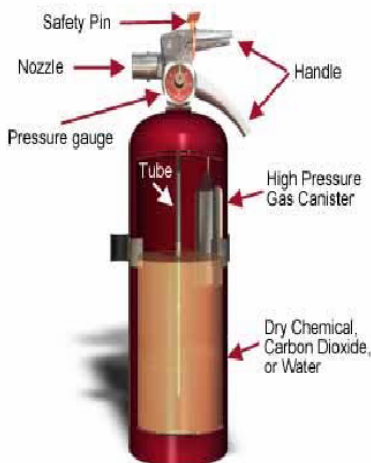
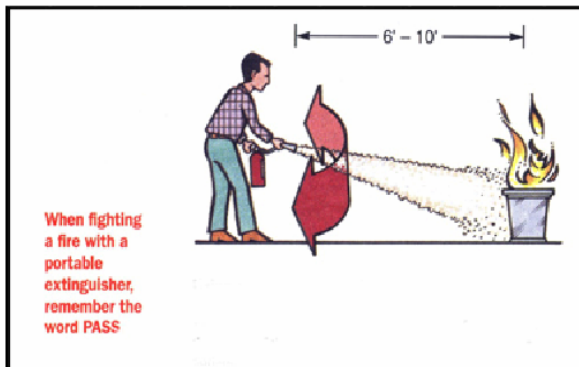


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How to use a Fire Extinguisher

- Use fire extinguishers only if you have been trained to do so.
- Use fire extinguishers only on small fires that are just starting to burn.
- Never turn your back to a fire. Keep a clear exit between you and the fire at all times.

Use the appropriate extinguisher for the fire (ie. ABC) and follow the PASS acronym:



- **PULL** - Pull the pin or ring.
- **AIM** - Aim the nozzle at the base of the fire. Approach the fire and stop about 8 feet away.
- **SQUEEZE** - Squeeze or press the handle together.
- **SWEEP** - Sweep the nozzle slowly from side to side, aiming at the base of the fire. Continue extinguish until the extinguisher is empty.
- Exit to a safe location and look for responding HUPD or building representative.
- Small fires that are extinguished must be reported to the Operations Center at 5-5560



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INSPECTION OF PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

Regular maintenance and inspections of your portable fire extinguishers will provide assurance that they will operate effectively and safely if they are needed. Additional information - OSHA [1910.157\(c\)\(4\)](#)

Inspect all extinguishers at least once a month.

1. Is each extinguisher in its designated place, clearly visible, and not blocked by equipment, coats or other objects that could interfere with access during an emergency?
2. Is the nameplate with operating instructions legible and facing outward?
3. Is the pressure gauge showing that the extinguisher is fully charged (the needle should be in the green zone)?
4. Is the pin and tamper seal intact?
5. Is the extinguisher in good condition and showing no signs of physical damage, corrosion, or leakage?
6. Have all dry powder extinguishers been gently rocked top to bottom to make sure the powder is not packing?





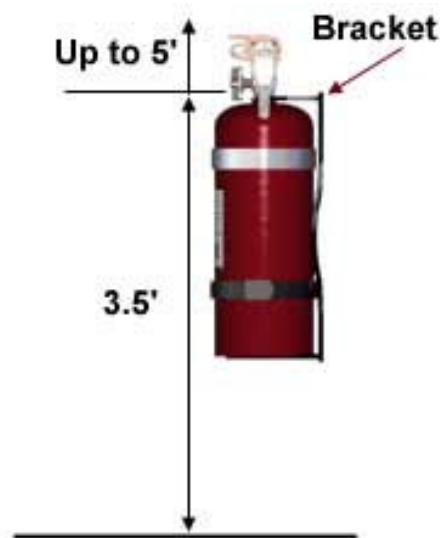
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INSTALLATION OF PORTABLE FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

To prevent fire extinguishers from being moved or damaged, they should be mounted on brackets or in wall cabinets with the carrying handle placed 3-1/2 to 5 feet above the floor.

Larger fire extinguishers need to be mounted at lower heights with the carrying handle about 3 feet from the floor.

Extinguishers should be signed.



An Employer must:

- Provide portable fire extinguishers for employee use and select and distribute the extinguishers based on the types of anticipated workplace fires and on the size and degree of hazard that would affect their use. [1910.157\(d\)\(1\)](#)
- **Ensure that the travel distance for employees to any Class A extinguisher is 75 feet** (22.9 meters) or less. [1910.157\(d\)\(2\)](#)
- **Ensure that the travel distance for employees to any Class B extinguisher is 50 feet** (15.2 meters) or less. [1910.157\(d\)\(4\)](#)
- **Base the travel distance for employees to any Class C extinguisher on the pattern for the existing Class A or Class B extinguishers.** [1910.157\(d\)\(5\)](#)
- **Ensure that the travel distance for employees from the combustible metal working area to any Class D extinguisher is 75 feet** (22.9 meters) or less. **Portable fire extinguishers for Class D hazards are required in areas where combustible metal powders, flakes, shavings, or similarly sized products are generated at least once every two weeks.** [1910.157\(d\)\(6\)](#)

If you require any additional information or assistance, please contact the EH&S Life Safety Officer – Mark Collins

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